
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

HJM 4004

Brief Description: Requesting that the District of Columbia be granted statehood.

Sponsors: Representatives Street, Macri, Mena, Reed, Pollet, Nance, Reeves, Slatter, Fitzgibbon, Farivar, Stearns, Cortes, Ramel, Santos, Doglio, Berry, Duerr, Taylor, Alvarado, Callan, Peterson, Entenman, Senn, Ryu, Goodman, Ormsby, Fosse, Simmons and Stonier.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requests that Congress and the President enact legislation to grant statehood to the people of Washington, D.C.

Hearing Date: 1/31/24

Staff: Connor Schiff (786-7093).

Background:

Washington, D.C., established in 1790, is the capital city of the United States. The city hosts all three branches of the United States (US) federal government, including multiple federal departments and agencies. The city has a population of approximately 700,000 people. The city is located along the Potomac River and borders Virginia to the southwest and Maryland to the north and east.

Governance of Washington, D.C.

Under Article I, section 8 of the US Constitution, Congress has the authority to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over the district that hosts the seat of the US government. In 1801 Congress enacted legislation which placed Washington, D.C. under the exclusive control of the

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federal government. Courts have interpreted exclusive jurisdiction to mean that Congress is the ultimate authority over Washington, D.C. and can limit local self-governance of Washington, D.C. residents.

In 1871 the territory of Washington, D.C., was reorganized under a single municipal government governed by a governor and a council appointed by the President, a popularly elected house of delegates, and a nonvoting delegate to Congress. This territorial government lasted approximately three years before being replaced by a temporary board of commissioners appointed by the President.

In 1973 Congress enacted the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, which provides for a locally elected mayor and 13-member council for Washington, D.C. The mayor and council have the authority to adopt laws, set local taxes, and develop an annual budget. Congress retains the authority to review and overturn all legislation passed by the council, including the budget.

In 1980 voters in Washington, D.C. approved an initiative calling for a state constitutional convention to write a constitution. A constitution for the state of New Columbia was approved by voters two years later. Since 1973 bills to admit New Columbia as the fifty-first state or to expand the authority of the local government have been regularly introduced into both the US House of Representatives and US Senate. In 2016 85 percent of voters in Washington, D.C. approved a referendum granting Washington, D.C. statehood. The US House of Representatives passed a bill granting statehood to Washington, D.C. in 2021, but the bill was not adopted by the Senate. Another bill granting statehood to Washington, D.C. was introduced in the US House of Representatives in 2023.

Federal Representation of Washington, D.C. Residents.

The Twenty-Third Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1961, provides the citizens of Washington, D.C. with the right to vote in presidential elections. Washington, D.C. voters choose three presidential electors.

Washington, D.C. residents elect one at-large congressional delegate to the US House of Representatives. The representative is permitted to sit on committees, participate in debate, and introduce legislation. The representative cannot vote on the floor. Washington, D.C. residents do not have any official representatives in the US Senate.

Beginning in 1990, Washington, D.C. voters have elected two "shadow" US senators and one "shadow" US representative, who is distinct from Washington, D.C.'s nonvoting congressional delegate. These officials are not seated in either chamber of Congress.

Residents of Washington, D.C. are subject to all federal taxes.

Summary of Bill:

Congress and the President are asked to enact legislation that grants statehood to Washington,

D.C.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.